

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2019
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor John Gayle called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Sandra Tooley, Eric Howard, and Andy Gibbs. Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody was absent. The invocation was given by Pastor David Adams, Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Mayor Gayle stated that he wanted to recognize Brother Marvin Broadwater, Sr. and asked him to come forward to discuss the Fatherhood Program that he is associated with.

Brother Marvin Broadwater, Sr., 3004 Slippery Rock Court, Columbus, Georgia, thanked the Mayor and Council for the privilege to address them. He was there to solicit their attendance as well as their support. There will be a Fatherhood Program on April 17, 2019 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the City Hall Annex Building in the Multi-Purpose Room. Mr. Broadwater stated that he serves as the State Representative of the Georgia State Organization of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. which is an organization that believes in community outreach and involvement. He has observed a vicious cycle for many of the fathers in this great State as it relates to child support. For this reason, the Georgia State Organization of Omega Psi Phi has partnered with the Georgia Department of Human Services Fatherhood Program to conduct fatherhood conversations around the State. The local Chapter, which is Alpha Gamma Gamma and is led by Bobby Wiseman and James Williams, will lead the charge and effort to inform the local community. The first conversation occurred in Columbus, Georgia and over 100 fathers have benefited from attendance. Those fathers who are unaware of the services and benefits this Program affords will have a chance to engage the subject matter experts. The goals of the fatherhood conversation are to inform the community of the numerous services offered to the non-custodial parent, especially fathers, and to dispel any misconceptions of the Georgia Department of Human Services Fatherhood Program. Topics to be discussed, but not limited to, are reinstatement of suspended driver's licenses, child support services, GED enrollment, job training, job search/placement, volunteer work opportunities, and support order modification where applicable. He believes that all challenging issues facing our government and policy-making, such as crime, economy, homelessness, unemployment, domestic violence, child abuse, neglect, drug use, prison population, poverty, and a plethora of other challenging community concerns, are inter-related. If we dim the radiance on one of these issues, we consequently decrease the radiance of another simultaneously. Fathers who find themselves in child support arrears will benefit tremendously from this Program. The plan is to blanket the City and inform all citizens of this Program and its benefits. Mr. Broadwater encouraged the Mayor and Council to attend and he thanked them for their time and continued support. He also thanked Councilman Eric Howard for his assistance in getting the Program off the ground.

John Strickland, Georgia Department of Health and Human Services, thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to tell them a little bit about the Georgia Fatherhood Program. This is an outreach Program offered through the Department of Human Services and it is administered through the Division of Child Support Services. In the State of Georgia, we were the only State-wide Georgia Fatherhood in the nation at one time. Now there is another State that is trying to immitate what we are doing because of the outstanding work that has taken place. It was launched State-wide in 1998 and has created opportunities for men and women in our State. It is in reach of every non-custodial parent within a 45 mile radius in Georgia. There are coming to Valdosta very soon and they will discuss and communicate the accesses that the non-custodial parent has. They will then be able to attach themselves to those resources and lead themselves to training, education, and employment opportunities. They also have a fatherhood celebration which is geared toward the entire family. It will be a time for children to laugh and families to lavish in fellowship with one another. It will also be an opportunity for the citizens of Valdosta to receive the fruits that the Program brings to them. He believes that with the help and support of the Mayor and Council, they can change lives throughout the community. He thanked the Mayor and Council for their time and support.

The minutes of the March 7, 2019 were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-7, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT ACT (TIA) AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF GEORGIA TO PROCEED WITH A REPLACEMENT AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER AT THE VALDOSTA REGIONAL AIRPORT

Consideration of a request from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority to approve a Resolution authorizing the acceptance of a Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Agreement with the State of Georgia to proceed with a replacement Air Traffic Control Tower at the Valdosta Regional Airport.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority requested two Projects through the T-SPLOST process. The City of Valdosta included one of the Projects, a replacement of the Air Traffic Control Tower, on its list of Projects submitted through that process. T-SPLOST passed in our region but not in Lowndes County. Projects funded with T-SPLOST are governed by the Transportation Investment Act (TIA). These Projects require that an Agreement be signed between the City of Valdosta and the State of Georgia. This is a new process for the City of Valdosta; however, it is not new to the State of Georgia. Once the TIA Agreement is signed and put into place, the TIA Regional Representative will coordinate with Airport Staff and, in turn City Staff, to put in place procedures for administering and overseeing this Project. No funds can be expended toward this Project through TIA without the Agreement being in place. The TIA Office will prepare the Agreement and submit it to the City for approval and signature. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing Mayor John Gayle to sign the Agreement in whatever manner it is presented, hardcopy or electronically, in order to accept it. Once the Agreement is signed, we will then begin preliminary discussions about the Control Tower at the Valdosta Regional Airport. That was Phase 1 of TSPLOST and this will get that part of the Project going for us. That Project is funded at \$2,705,000. Mark Barber recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing Mayor Gayle to sign the Agreement for the replacement of the Air Traffic Control Tower at the Valdosta Regional Airport.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Resolution No. 2019-7, a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to accept the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Agreement with the State of Georgia in order to proceed with a replacement Air Traffic Control Tower at the Valdosta Regional Airport, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

ORDINANCE NO. 2019-7, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S RADAR PERMIT

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend the City of Valdosta's Radar Permit.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Georgia Department of Public Safety issues Radar Permits to law enforcement agencies so that speed detection devices can be used to enforce the posted speed limit. This permit is necessary to legally run radar on City streets. Per Georgia Code, the City applies to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Office of Traffic Operations with all Permit changes or renewals. Upon review of the City requested revisions or renewal, the Office of Traffic Operations compiles the updated list and sends it to the Mayor and City Council for their approval at the local level. The approved and executed list is then submitted to the Georgia Department of Public Safety (GDOPS) in Atlanta for final authorization and issuance of the updated permit. The City recently amended and adopted changes to the radar permit to: (1) add a 55 MPH school zone from Mile Post 18.46 to 18.73 on SR 7 (Inner Perimeter Road) for the new Valdosta High School (VHS), and (2) drop the old school zone for the old Valdosta High School on Forrest Street. After the submitted changes were executed and transmitted by the City, the request was sent by GDOT to the GDOPS in Atlanta for final authorization and issuance. However, during this step, GDOPS discovered a paperwork error that does not affect signage but is associated with the described Mile Post distance to the City limits. To be specific, the distance from Country Club Road to the north Valdosta City limits on SR 7 is being revised to reflect the actual distance (a change of 1,650 feet north of Country Club Road to 1,900 feet north of Country Club Road) which necessitates

changing the Mile Post description from Mile Post 24.06 to 24.68. Therefore, Staff is requesting that this Ordinance amendment be accepted and approved at the local level by City Council and transmitted to the GDOT and GDOPS for their final processing, authorization, and issuance of an updated radar permit for the City of Valdosta. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the Ordinance to revise the Radar Permit as submitted.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2019-7, an Ordinance to amend the City of Valdosta's Radar Permit, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids to purchase two sets of Genesis Battery Powered Vehicle Extrication Tools for the Valdosta Fire Department.

Fire Chief Freddie Broome stated that vehicle extrication is the process of removing a vehicle from around a person who has been involved in a motor vehicle collision when conventional means of exit are impossible or inadvisable. A delicate approach is needed to minimize injury to the victim during the extrication. Vehicle extrication tools are often referred to as "The Jaws of Life." The Valdosta Fire Department responds to all vehicle accidents involving patient injuries. In 2018, the Department responded to 388 vehicle accident with injuries. The quicker firefighters are able to safely remove a passenger from a mangled vehicle, the quicker the EMT/Paramedics are able to provide lifesaving patient care and transportation to the hospital. Engines 1 & 5 are the only engines in our fleet that are not equipped with the Genesis Battery Powered Extrication Tools. The current extrication tools are more than 15 years old. There are several maintenance issues and the manufacturer discontinued service on them approximately six years ago. Parts are very limited or no longer available. The sets also use an older type of hydraulic fluid that the industry is moving away from due to its toxic nature. Each extrication tool set includes a battery operated cutter, a battery operator spreader, a 28 volt Milwaukee battery, and two, 28 volt chargers. Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, sent out letters to Genesis Extrication Rescue Tools vendors and the low bid was submitted by Rescue System Unlimited, which is located in Tallahassee, Florida, in the amount of \$47,695. Chief Broome recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Rescue System Unlimited in the amount of \$47,695 and authorize the Fire Department to proceed with the purchase.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Rescue System Unlimited in the amount of \$47,695 and authorize the Fire Department to proceed with the purchase of two sets of Genesis Battery Powered Vehicle Extrication Tools for the Valdosta Fire Department.

Consideration of bids for pavement for the Valdosta Fire Department Training Facility.

Fire Chief Freddie Broome stated that for over 25 years, the Valdosta Fire Department has used 133 Blanchard Street for training firefighters at the Valdosta Regional Fire Training Center. The property still has the original asphalt and concrete surfaces, minus a few patch repairs. The pavement often experiences fire trucks weighing up to 79,000 pounds. The apparatus pad is in terrible condition. This area is frequently used when the Fire Trucks are at the Training Facility. The condition of the apparatus pad is creating unnecessary wear and tear on the trucks while entering and leaving the Training Facility and unsafe conditions when using the area for training and applicant testing. During the last Physical Agility Test, the test was stopped several times due to applicants slipping and falling due to uneven and cracked pavement and overall conditions. In the fiscal year 2018-2019 Budget process, \$65,000 was budgeted for repairs (Line Item #CP-19.58 Hydraulic Extrication Sets). Staff consulted with several local contractors in December of 2018 to determine a pavement structure suitable for the loading. The scope of work was advertised on the City's website and in the local newspaper. The Fire Department held a pre-bid conference on site of the Training Facility on February 27, 2019. The meeting was held on site so that contractors could see the operations and the condition of the pavement. Reames and Sons and The Scruggs Company attended. The contractors suggested that two scenarios be presented. An asphalt surface and a concrete surface, respectively. Both scenarios are capable of carrying the loads. The benefit of two scenarios is possibly getting quotes on materials, which fluctuate, at low costs. The Project was advertised as an asphalt base bid and

two alternates, a concrete surface and driveways, and ditch improvement off site. This recommendation gave the City added flexibility in awarding the work should bid prices exceed budgeted project amounts. The low responsible base bid will be the basis of determination for the recommendation submitted to City Council for award. The scope of work will be done in three different areas to completely replace the asphalt and concrete work at the Training Center. This Project will also expand the parking area for the Fire Truck and other vehicles that are attending training at the Training Center and create handicap accessible parking spaces. The bid opening was held on March 12, 2019. Two contractors, Reames and Sons and The Scruggs Company, submitted bids. Reames and Sons submitted the low base bid in the amount of \$47,258 with the alternate prices as follows: Alternate A - \$58,113.00 (consists of a concrete surface at the identical location of the base bid). The base bid and Alternate A cannot be approved together because they are the same location; Alternate B - \$16,780.00 (consists of ditch piping and driveways). It removes an asphalt driveway and replaces it with a concrete driveway. The concrete driveway meets the City's specifications. The new driveway can be placed in such a way that the undercarriage of large vehicles such as a fire truck does not touch the pavement. Chief Broome recommended that Council approve the base bid submitted by Reames and Sons in the amount of \$47,258 plus Alternate B in the amount of \$16,780 for a total of \$64,038.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the base bid submitted by Reames and Sons in the amount of \$47,258 plus Alternate B in the amount of \$16,780 for a total of \$64,038 for pavement for the Valdosta Fire Department Training Facility.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

John Robinson, 3227 San Juline Circle, Lake Park, commended the Mayor and Council for the way they conducted their Retreat and for allowing the small businesses to do work for the City. He encouraged the Council to continue to reach out and work with the small businesses. Mr. Robinson stated that he and George Rhynes went to a large Economic Summit in Washington, D.C. and they learned a lot. They are members of the National Community Development Coalition and there are a lot of things that they have learned. They can have an outreach with the City, local banks, and small businesses. If they can continue to work together, there will be improvements in our community. They need some money and new projects to come in on the south side of town. If you change the environment then you change the people and the only way you can change the environment is to have some money in circulation. He understands the role that prayers and fatherhood play but they need some funds.

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, stated that there is a racial problem in Valdosta and across this nation which most of you already know but are probably in denial. There is a problem with the banking institutions here with approving loans and employing blacks as cashiers and managers. They visited half of the banks here in town and they did not see any black managers and very few black cashiers in some banks. They consider this a disgrace and they are going to visit the rest of the banks. Former City Councilman James Wright identified a problem with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Grant system and he fought for that and more. Mr. Rhynes stated that he and Mr. Robinson have gone to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) over five times throughout the years regarding the Federal dollars coming into the community. They are not going to stop because they are 100% sure that eventually Valdosta will change. The event that they went to in Washington, D.C. had approximately 1,100 registered people and 700 showed up. It was a great meeting and he was hoping that the Valdosta Daily Times would do a story on the information that he received concerning the banks and their responsibilities to the communities in which they are set up in. The banks have a responsibility and they educated him pretty well. They are hoping that they can become more inclusive and can expand the mindset of the people in Valdosta along with the elected officials. Also, there is still not a Georgia flag in front of City Hall, the City Hall Annex, the Lowndes County Museum, and the Lowndes County Courthouse for whatever reason. That is disrespecting our Veterans and all those who have served. As a Veteran it eats away at the core of his heart. He could have lost his life during the Vietnam error. He cannot understand how we have elected officials who allow that to happen. Even more concerning is that we do not have active duty Commanders at Moody Air Force Base who will stand up and say "put the flag up" that represents our military personnel.

Mayor Gayle thanked Mr. Rhynes and Mr. Robinson for attending the recent Retreat. They went the extra mile this year to bring the Retreat to Valdosta and there was very little participation even after everyone said they would attend if it was here. He was disappointed that there were not more people there to observe the way that they do business.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that there will be an Art Walk tomorrow in the Downtown area from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. There will be art displayed on the sidewalks as citizens do their shopping Downtown.

Valdosta State University will hold an Active Shooter Drill tomorrow from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. They asked that people stay away from the campus so that they can go through the Drill.

The City Government 101 Class starts on Monday, April 1, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. There are 23 citizens who have signed up for the class and Council is invited to attend.

Georgia Cities Week and Community Development Week will be held in April and there will be a lot of activities going on for both of those events. We are trying to involve the community in several of these events to promote community engagement with our local government.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Carroll stated that he would like a schedule for the City Government 101 classes and also the names of the class members who are registered so he can reach out to the ones in his District. Also, every week they receive updates from the various City Departments and there is a lot of great work being done by Department Heads and Staff. We should all be very proud of them. Another great partnership with a new Downtown business, Coleman Talley, LLP, is that they are volunteering to do a program for Heirs Property and Prevention and a Wills Clinic. They will literally prepare wills for people who do not have the money or the whereabouts to have this done. This is just another indicator of the many great things that are going on in the City of Valdosta.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the March 21, 2019 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:09 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, April 11, 2019.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta